

Regarding Point V

1. Prior Art

In this opinion, reference is made to the following documents:

D1: DE 198 08 273 A

D2: US-A-5,442,720

D3: US-A-5,011,262

D4: US-A-4,770,535

2. Novelty and Inventive Step (Articles 33(1), (2), (3) PCT)

1. The subject matter of claim 1 is novel for the following reasons:
2. Document D1 is regarded as the closest prior art. This document discloses all the features set forth in the preamble of Claim 1.
3. The device according to Claim 1 differs from D1 in that the measuring probe system includes a plurality of measuring probes coupled to the common optical path via respective optical paths, and in that a switching device is disposed between the common optical path and the respective optical paths, said switching device allowing the different measuring probes to be individually brought into a bidirectionally transmitting connection with the transmitter/receiver unit.
4. A bidirectional switching device between a common optical path and the respective optical paths is not disclosed or suggested by any of the available documents (D1-D4). US'720 describes an input switch and an output switch (monodirectional) for each measuring probe; US'262

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describes an output switch (monodirectional) for each measuring probe; and US'535 discloses a monodirectional switching device at the detector output.

5. Claims 2-7 are dependent on Claim 1 and therefore also meet the requirements of the PCT with regard to novelty and inventive step.

3. **Industrial Applicability (Article 33(1), (4) PCT)**

The subject matter of the present application is industrially applicable.

Miscellaneous

The specification does not mention documents D2-D4 nor does it specify the relevant prior art disclosed therein (Rule 5.1(a) (ii) PCT).